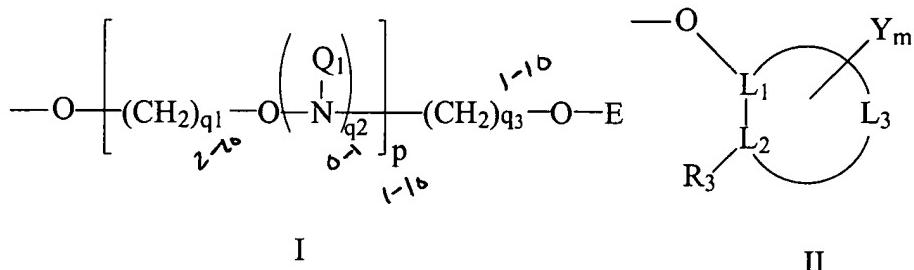


1. (Amended) An oligonucleotide comprising a plurality of nucleotides, wherein:

a first portion of said plurality of nucleotides have B-form conformational geometry and are joined together in a continuous sequence, at least two of said nucleotides of said first portion being ribonucleotides; and

a further portion of said plurality of nucleotides are ribonucleotide that have A-form conformation geometry and are joined together in at least one continuous sequence.

4 (Amended). The oligonucleotide of claim 1 wherein each nucleotide of said further portion, independently, is a 2'-fluoro nucleotide or a nucleotide having a 2'-substituent having the formula I or II:



wherein

E is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> alkyl, N(Q<sub>1</sub>)(Q<sub>2</sub>) or N=C(Q<sub>1</sub>)(Q<sub>2</sub>);

each Q<sub>1</sub> and Q<sub>2</sub> is, independently, H, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> alkyl, dialkylaminoalkyl, a nitrogen protecting group, a tethered or untethered conjugate group, a linker to a solid support, or Q<sub>1</sub> and Q<sub>2</sub>, together, are joined in a nitrogen protecting group or a ring structure optionally containing at least one additional heteroatom selected from N and O;

R<sub>3</sub> is OX, SX, or N(X)<sub>2</sub>;

each X is, independently, H, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> haloalkyl, C(=NH)N(H)Z, C(=O)N(H)Z or OC(=O)N(H)Z;

Z is H or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub> alkyl;

L<sub>1</sub>, L<sub>2</sub> and L<sub>3</sub> form a ring system having from about 4 to about 7 carbon atoms or having from about 3 to about 6 carbon atoms and 1 or 2 heteroatoms selected from oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur and wherein said ring system is aliphatic, unsaturated aliphatic, aromatic, or saturated or unsaturated heterocyclic;